

T H B  
Q U A K E R.

A N O V E L.

V O L. III.



T H E  
Q U A K E R.

A NOVEL,  
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

By a L A D Y.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. III.

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L O N D O N:  
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,  
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THE  
QUAKER.

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LETTER XX.

MISS LUTWIDGE

TO

MISS MOSTYN.

AFTER having discussed more fully the important subject, and congratulated each other on a discovery so conducive to our happiness, we took a few turns to compose our agitated spirits, and then returned to the house, as

happy a trio as Matlock could produce.

My good mother, who knew not the *dénouement* that had taken place, nor was, as yet, more than in part acquainted with the deception, was at the door of the saloon, and addressed my lover by his usual appellation, informing him that Cofway and Mr. Shenstone were gone into the garden to seek for us.

“ Ah ! my dear madam,” cried I, smiling, “ how much are you deceived ! Cofway is here ; it is Peterwyn that is with Mr. Shenstone. What punishment shall we inflict upon the impostors ? But, now I think

“ think of it, it has been a double de-  
“ ception; so all parties are even.”

“ What do you tell me, my love?  
“ this gentleman Cofway, and the  
“ other Petwyn! Why, how is it  
“ possible?”

“ Quite as possible, madam, as for  
“ this young lady to be your daughter,  
“ which I had the happiness just now  
“ to discover. My good uncle has  
“ shewn himself an excellent plotter as  
“ well as possessed of a comfortable  
“ share of *retenue*; but for a mistake of  
“ Miss Maynard, the disguise had yet  
“ continued, nor would, I suppose,  
“ have been unravelled till I, *Edward*,  
“ *take thee, Eliza*, had escaped our  
“ lips, and Hymen assisted at the mas-  
“ querade.

“querade. He good-naturedly con-  
“spired with each party in an innocent  
“deception, and at the same time had  
“the satisfaction to see his own wishes  
“accomplished. But I am astonished  
“he did not communicate his projects,  
“when he found them in the desired  
“train; for it is but a few days since  
“that I unbofomed myself to him on  
“the subject of my attachment to your  
“supposed niece, and not a syllable  
“escaped him that might lead me to  
“suggest the agreeable deception that  
“had been practised.”

“Nor to me either, I assure you,”  
replied my mamma; “for, when I  
“mentioned to him the growing at-  
“tachment I perceived in Octavia to-  
“wards you, even before she was ac-  
“quainted

“ acquainted with her own sensations, he  
“ only smiled, and said, Charles must  
“ thank himself for sending so attrac-  
“ tive an ambassador; and spoke of  
“ you in terms so respectful, that I more  
“ than ever revered his character for  
“ not resenting the disappointment to  
“ his hopes by a less friendly conduct.  
“ All is well that ends well; and I  
“ hope none of us shall have cause to  
“ regret this discovery, since it must  
“ promote the general happiness. But  
“ I long to make my Lutwidge a par-  
“ taker of it, and will go seek him im-  
“ mediately.”

At that instant my father and Mr. Shenstone joined us; and, by the smiles of the former when this pleasing discovery was mentioned, it was ob-

vious they had acted in concert throughout the scene, and promoted the accomplishment of their own wishes, by bringing us together without any appearance of design.

What think you of their scheme, Harriet? For my part, I deem it the most politic one they could have adopted; for, had we been introduced to each other as intended lovers, by the commands of our parents, it is more than possible (so capricious is human nature) that we had each been devoid of those tender sentiments which now inspire our hearts. The most dutiful cannot help wishing for the liberty of choice on a subject that is to fix their fate for life. Of this, every parent, from their own feelings, must judge; yet

yet there are many who prefer unlimited authority and compulsive treatment to means more gentle and far more likely to enforce obedience. Should I ever be a mother, the latter shall be my plan. But I will not intrude upon your time, by telling you of my matronly intentions, while I am sensible you are all the while on the tenter-hooks of impatience for a description of the first interview between Selina and the friend of my adored Charles.

I should first tell you, that my lover, though persuaded that Miss Maynard was the lady who had captivated Petwyn, in all his letters to his friend had never once mentioned his suspicions, anticipating the agreeable surprise he

would receive, on his arrival, to find her so unexpectedly among us.

When my dear parents and my worthy uncle elect had mutually congratulated each other on the happy success of their little plot, and the latter had received our united thanks for the tender attention he had shewn to our happiness, we all went together to the saloon, where our visitor (who, it seems, was also in the secret) was amusing himself, on our entrance, in looking at some curious prints; and did not, at first, observe Selina, who shrunk behind us as if afraid to meet him her heart so ardently longed to behold.

Cosway,

Cosway, with a gay air, first took me by the hand; and, presenting me to his friend:

“ I have now, Ned, the happiness  
“ to present to you Miss Lutwidge,  
“ whom, thanks to the credit of your  
“ name, I hope soon to introduce to  
“ you by a more endearing title, and  
“ flatter myself she will find nothing  
“ more discordant in the sound of Cos-  
“ way than of Petwyn. This” (ta-  
king the hand of our blushing friend)  
“ is Miss Maynard, whom I must beg  
“ leave to present to you as the dearest  
“ friend of my Octavia.”

The sweet girl advanced with an en-  
gaging timidity; while the astonished  
Petwyn,

Petwyn, not able to credit the evidence of his senses, could not find power to articulate a single syllable more than :

“Is it possible? am I indeed so happy?” and, sinking down on his knees before her, thanked heaven for the unexpected blessing with such fervour, that not one of us could help smiling but our trembling friend, whose joyful emotions, (to find herself so tenderly remembered,) from being restrained by delicacy, were near reducing her to the same situation as when she first beheld him from the garden.

In a few minutes, however, both resumed their scattered senses; <sup>he</sup> and, taking the hand she had extended to raise him

him from his humble posture, he led her to a seat, and, placing himself by her, expressed his joyful sensations, at this unexpected meeting, in a language more composed, though it could not be more intelligible, than that in which his silent eloquence had before declared them.

Dinner soon after came upon the table; and, the conversation becoming general, I had the satisfaction to observe, that our amiable friend has not thrown away her affections on a charming form, without those more fascinating attractions which are necessary to secure a permanent attachment. Petwyn is, *bona fide*, a most engaging mortal; and, next to my phoenix of phoenixes, I know

know no one who is half so agreeable.

Notwithstanding love is acknowledged to be pretty airy food, and perfectly adapted to such deities as we young ones then appeared to each other's infatuated imaginations, yet we all shewed our mortal propensions by condescending to partake of more substantial aliment; but I have since several times observed a sigh issue from the bosom of our lovers; I imagine, from the fears, that must naturally arise, that the difference of their religion will be an insurmountable obstacle to their happiness.

But I must flatter myself it will not.  
Mrs. Maynard's known indulgence to  
the

the best of children persuades me she will not see her beloved Selina unhappy from a consideration that did not make her so.

Her own undiminished felicity in the marriage-state is a sufficient proof that a difference of sentiment does not always produce discord. A pious soul is restrained by no forms; it can breathe its wishes and thanksgivings as freely in one mode of worship as another, in the church as in the meeting. She is no superstitious bigot; nor will her heart, I am convinced, disdain to acknowledge, that the practice of virtue is true religion, by whatever sect practised. Then is it possible she should refuse the alliance of a good man for her daughter,  
even

even though he happens to be of a different persuasion?

But shall I, who am so young in wisdom, presume to dictate the conduct of one, so much my superior both in that and years? My arguments flow principally from my ardent wishes to see the happiness of our friend established. If my ideas, on this important matter, are erroneous, I trust they will be forgiven, since friendship, more than knowledge, is their source. Happy myself, in an approaching union with a man to whom I am attached by the most tender inclinations, (and whose merit renders him equally respected by my parents,) I wish such happiness to my Selina, to my Harriet, in short, to every one whose

whose felicity is connected with my own.

But a few weeks longer, and I shall have no pretensions to the name of Lutwidge. Settlements, clothes, and all the paraphernalia of bridal ceremonies, are already talked of. The good Shenstone pleads for an early day; he is even more impatient than his engaging nephew. But the latter dares not so much presume; my smiles are too valuable to his heart to hazard my frowns, by pressing me on a subject to which I am but too ready to listen, though the usual maidenish scruples operate to dictate replies unfavourable to his wishes.

In

In short, I do not love to be hurried even into what I have a mind to do. All in good time ; but, in pure pity to myself, (for who loves to be teased ?) I must get rid of Shenstone's solicitations by becoming his niece within a month, or I shall absolutely have open war declared against me ; and, when hostilities commence, who knows but even the tender suing Cosway may take upon him to head the enemy ? and a surrender will then be unavoidable ; so it is better to yield with a good grace, if only to deprive them of the pleasure of a victory.

But how I trifle ! Join me, my dear Harriet, in soliciting the farther indulgence of Mrs. Maynard in permitting my

my Selina to continue with us till after my memorable day; and, when I have a right to assume such a matronly office, I promise to conduct the dear girl home, and will then do myself the honour to introduce at the Dale two personages, who, for both our sakes, I must flatter myself, will meet a favourable, nay, welcome, reception.

Adieu, dearest girl! Pray for the future happiness of Selina, and rejoice in that of

Your

OCTAVIA.

The

The male animals greet you. I forgot also to tell you, that my good uncle elect proposes resigning to us Shenstone-Grove (a delightful villa, about four miles distance) for our country residence; a resignation neither of us should have permitted, with pleasure, had it not been accompanied with the promise of his becoming one of our family, which will greatly increase my happiness; for this respectable friend has so endeared himself to me by his kind behaviour, that I feel for him an affection almost bordering on a filial one.

LETTER

## LETTER XXI.

MR. LUTWIDGE

TO

MRS. MAYNARD.

Dear madam,

**Y**ESTERDAY saw my Octavia united to the most deserving of young men, and rendered us the happiest of parents; for what greater felicity is there, in this world, than to see our offspring happily and worthily disposed of? It is the wish of seeing your's equally so that induces me to become an advocate for the friend of my son-in-law, who is an agreeable young man,  
and,

and, though not in affluent, is in very easy, circumstances, and of the most respectable character and connections. The young people, it seems, met by accident some months ago, and have ever since retained the most tender impression of each other, which has been greatly heightened on a more intimate acquaintance. It is true, they are of different persuasions; but, as they are both of virtuous and amiable dispositions, they must be equal candidates for heaven, as if their modes of faith were similar; and, I am persuaded, what outward show of religion is wanting, in either, will be sufficiently compensated by good works, which are the surest guarantee for future bliss.

In

In general, the young men of the present age have no religious *traits* in their character; at least their piety is not conspicuous enough to authorise a suggestion of their professing any religion at all. To such a neutral Christian I would not wish you to give your daughter; for, though I do not think it absolutely necessary that her husband should be a quaker, I think it very necessary he should be a good man; and such, if I may credit my own judgement, and general report, is he who sues for the happiness of being allied to your Selina.

You have yourself experienced, that the inclinations are not always to be combated by religious scruples; and,

having yielded to their impulse, have found no ill consequences, because the object of them was worthy, and less bound by outward forms than interior piety. Choice, at length, or probably a satiety for external gaieties, rendered your appearance more conformable to that of your husband. He loved you before ; he could but love you then, as every act of complacency, between a married pair, must tend to preserve affection ; but I would venture to affirm, that this change of habit did not increase your piety. You were good before ; and it is not in human nature to soar beyond perfection,

It was natural that your daughter should be bred in the same faith as her parents professed, and that her appearance

ance should be conformable to that which custom had rendered pleasing to yourself; but, as the heart is not to be restrained by forms, it is not less natural that she should be susceptible of the attractions of an agreeable object, though his external bespoke him of a different persuasion. Those, who have ever felt the influence of love, can readily excuse its weaknesses in their children, unless the unworthiness of the object renders it necessary to discourage what, if indulged, would be productive of misery and self-reproach.

Were my good old friend alive, I am persuaded he would acknowledge the propriety of these observations; and, though he might have been better satisfied that his Selina should have made

her choice among the young men of his own sect, yet he would not oppose her happiness with one of another, so his life was not disgraced by irreligion and impiety, and the fortune he could bestow on her dissipated in unworthy purposes.

Excuse me, dearest madam, for taking upon me the province of advice in an affair of such serious consequence to your future happiness. You have often done me the favour to intreat it on subjects less interesting; and, from my unalterable good wishes for your felicity, I now take the liberty of bestowing it unasked.

We all unite our thanks for your indulging us so long with the society of  
your

your amiable daughter; and, next week, mine, accompanied by her husband, proposes restoring her to your maternal embraces. At the same time I shall do myself the pleasure of waiting upon you; and am, with much esteem,

Your friend,

W. LUTWIDGE.

B 3 LETTER

## LETTER XXII.

MISS MOSTYN

TO

MRS. COSWAY.

**I**T pains me, dear madam, to cloud your happy hours by the most mournful intelligence, instead of lively congratulations on your recent marriage. May every bliss the state produces long be yours! But bliss, alas! is transient. I was this morning rejoicing in your felicity, and (from the apparent satisfaction which Mrs. Maynard discovered at your father's letter) flattering myself that my dear Selina would find in

in him a most powerful advocate, when the pleasure I experienced was suddenly damped by a paralytic stroke, which seems to aim at the life of my worthy benefactress.

We were drinking our tea, this amiable parent frequently thanking heaven that the affections of her Selina were not unworthily bestowed, (which her fears, I believe, had too often prompted her to dread.) She said to me, " Good men, Harriet, are indeed very  
" scarce; to such an one can a tender  
" mother refuse her child, when con-  
" scious that her felicity is centered in  
" the compliance?" when, just as she had articulated these words, almost a total suspension of her faculties immediately succeeded; and, sinking from

her chair, appearances seemed to threaten an immediate dissolution.

Judge, my dear madam, of my distress; I, who have found in her all the tenderness of a mother! But, if mine is great, what must be that of her beloved daughter! To you I leave it to break to her this dreadful intelligence; which, though conveyed in the most soothing terms, must be as a dagger to her breast. Convey the sweet mourner, as soon as possible, to this house of woe. The physicians give me little hopes of Mrs. Maynard's recovery. Since the death of a husband, tenderly beloved, I find she has never enjoyed a settled state of health; a complication of disorders, which originated in excessive grief, has been making continual

nual inroads on her weakened constitution; and now, by one sudden stroke, death appears ready to seize his prey.

Every minute will be an hour till I hear the sound of your carriage. Come, then, and join your tears and prayers with those of the unhappy

HARRIET.

B. 5

LETTER

## LETTER XXIII.

M R S. C O S W A Y

T O

M R S. L U T W I D G E.

Castle Dale.

Dear madam,

**W**HILE our dear Selina is gone to  
indulge those sorrows in which  
we all participate, I snatch a moment to  
tell you, that we arrived here but just  
time enough for our poor friend to re-  
ceive the last blessing of her expiring  
parent. But gracious heaven, who be-  
stows on the virtuous its portion of joys  
as well as sorrows, softened the bitter  
cup

cup of grief, by permitting the dear departed faint the recovery of her senses a few minutes previous to her death; and she breathed her last sighs in prayers for the happiness of her child.

As soon as we alighted from the coach, we were conducted, in mournful silence, by Miss Mostyn, to the apartment of her dying benefactress.

My father took the hand of our weeping Selina; and, accompanied by Petwyn, approached her parent's bed, while Harriet and I, withdrawing to the window, prayed heaven she might have the satisfaction of being known by her, and blessed, before she died.

The wildness of her eyes at first testified a total insensibility to every surrounding object; when our young friend, affected at seeing her beloved mother in that afflicting state, caught one of her clay-cold hands, and, pressing it to her trembling lips, wept over it in all the agonies of despairing grief.

At that instant her suspended senses resumed their seat.

“My child!” said she, raising her languid eyes. “Heaven, I thank thee for this last indulgence! My worthy friend too!”

My

My father, at that moment, presented Petwyn.

“ Enough ; I see ; a mother’s blessing to them both ! ” And, raising herself on her pillow, she made a feeble effort to join their hands ; but, her strength failing, she faintly articulated :

“ My friend, to heaven and thee I leave the care of their future happiness : ” and, lifting her dying eyes towards the throne of mercy, she breathed her expiring sighs on the bosom of her child, who, on beholding her so near her end, had sunk upon the bed in an agony of silent woe.

For

For some minutes we suffered her to indulge her grief; but, finding that it increased from the contemplation of its object, we endeavoured to draw her from the mournful scene; but it was not till gentle violence accompanied our arguments that we could prevail on her to quit the remains of a parent so tenderly beloved; a parent, who had never, in a single instance of her life, opposed her inclinations, and even sacrificed her own most sanguine wishes to promote her happiness.

The affliction of Miss Mostyn was little less than that of Selina. In losing Mrs. Maynard, she beheld herself again the prey of fate, with nothing but a scanty

scanty income, and "the wide world before her;" but I am very ill acquainted with the friendly sentiments of Selina towards her if ever she wants an asylum while she has one to give her, though grief, at that distressing period, prevented her from expressing such a kind assurance.

Our friend will have a plentiful fortune, and possesses a heart capable of dispensing it properly; nor (if I have any skill in developing the mind of man) will she ever find her benevolent intentions thwarted by him whom she has made choice of to partake of it with her; for Petwyn appears to possess all those generous propensions, which a good fortune alone enables us to display, though

though a moderate one does not totally obscure. He is, I am persuaded, a deserving young man, by the respect with which he ever speaks of his mother and sister: a good son, and a good brother, must surely make a good husband. Is he not also the distinguished and bosom friend of my adored Cosway? that, at once, sufficiently stamps his merit, without eulogium; for, do the truly worthy ever discover animosity for the licentious?

In a day or two, my dear madam, you shall hear from us again. We propose staying a few weeks at the Dale, in hopes to afford, by our society, some little alleviation to the sorrows of our friend; but that of Petwyn we trust to most,

most, though willing to acquire the merit of it ourselves. He leaves us in a few days; but will stay no longer at the manor than to transact some business of necessity for his mother, and then bring his sister with him to increase our friendly group.

My father laments a separation, in which, he fears, you experience some gloomy hours, deprived of all the society most dear to you; but will hasten his return as soon as he can be no longer useful to our mourning friend, who will, I hope, in a day or two, be able to attend to an investigation of her affairs.

With

With unabating tenderness, and duty  
not less from being divided, I am, as  
ever, my dear madam,

Your affectionate daughter,

O, COSWAY.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIV.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

Dear madam,

**Y**ESTERDAY we all were present at the melancholy ceremony of our friend's interment, which was conducted according to the rules of her religion; and, in compliance to the usual custom, her sorrowing daughter appeared at the funeral without any of those exterior signs of mourning that we all wore on the occasion; but I could plainly see it was a violence to her feelings

ings to wear a dress so ill adapted to the sincerity of her grief. But, though she paid that tribute to custom, immediately on our return from the awful scene, she threw aside the quaker's habit, and put on one more descriptive of a mourning heart, and has expressed her intention of wearing it the usual time; when, I hope, the grief-worn countenance, which so truly corresponds with her sable dress, will have resumed its cheerful smiles; and piety and resignation, added to the happy prospect before her, will have wiped away her woe.

Her lover left us the day before her parent's funeral. He would not have gone so soon, but prudence pointed out the propriety of such a step; and the

the good, however reluctant, will not refuse such sacrifices as discretion prompts. If he admired her before, how much more transcendently lovely will she appear to him at his return; the native splendour of her complexion being heightened by her mournful habit, and, like an April morn, smiling through her tears at his approach; for, well I know, her whole happiness is placed in his affection; and the goods of this world would produce her no satisfaction, if it were not for the idea that her Petwyn will one day participate them with her.

My father will be the glad conveyancer of this. He is in haste to leave the Dale, having looked into our friend's affairs, which required very little adjustment,

justment, as they were always kept in a state of regularity during the life of their late respectable possessor. Mrs. Maynard has left her daughter sole executrix; and, her husband having died very rich, though he left no will, her possessions were very large, as the principal part of his fortune was in personals; and the real estate, of about three hundred a year, alone went to the next male heir.

Miss Maynard has, as I expected, assured Harriet of her undiminished friendship and protection, so long as she chooses to make her house an asylum; and has also presented her with five hundred pounds, as a small recompense for her tender attentions to her mother. But, though the former was accepted with

with pleasure, the latter was declined with that delicacy which marks all her conduct. Selina, however, would accept of no denial ; insisting, that it was what she was conscious Mrs. Maynard would have done, had it pleased heaven to have permitted her the use of her reason long enough to have testified her wishes ; every one of which, that she could possibly suggest, she declared she should think it as much her duty to fulfil as if they had been particularly expressed,

Every servant has also experienced some mark of her generosity ; and elegant rings are now making for all those who have the happiness of being among her most distinguished friends, of which our family and that of her lover form the larger part ; and there are  
also

also several respectable people, of Mrs. Maynard's more intimate acquaintance, that will have a similar compliment paid them ; which, though unusual amongst those of her religion, our dear Selina flatters herself cannot be unacceptable, since every proof of remembrance must be valuable to friendship.

I believe we shall none of us weep, when Petwyn returns, unless it be for joy ; his society is too enlivening not to be generally missed. Even my Cofway greatly anticipates his return, who has so often declared, and still declares, that the conversation of his Octavia can fill up every void, and make the most gloomy desert cheerful ; and he had even the audacity to declare, this morning, that he was as impatient for the

the

the arrival of Miss Petwyn as her brother.

“ Indeed !” cried I, affecting to be displeased ; “ it is a pity, then, you  
“ did not accompany him to Wheatly-  
“ Manor.”

“ I do not think so, my love,” smiling at the air of gravity I assumed ;  
“ such a step would not have forwarded  
“ those wishes that urge me to be im-  
“ patient for his return. I flatter my-  
“ self, that the arrival of our friends  
“ will infuse an air of cheerfulness  
“ through a mansion, which, at present,  
“ is clouded with the gloomy veil of  
“ sorrow. Lucy is an amiable, lively,  
“ girl ; and her society will, in some  
“ degree, compensate to Miss May-

VOL. III.

C

“ nard.

“ nard for the loss of that she is most  
“ fond of. I should be sorry to snatch  
“ my Octavia from Nottingham while  
“ her presence is necessary to the hap-  
“ piness of her friend ; but then I flat-  
“ ter myself it may be dispensed with,  
“ as I have some affairs to settle that re-  
“ quire my attendance in London.  
“ Besides, I long to introduce my  
“ lovely bride to those brilliant circles  
“ in which she is by nature formed to  
“ shine. You see, my love, I am not  
“ one of those husbands who fear that  
“ any man should look upon their  
“ wife : on the contrary, I would have  
“ mine generally admired ; for my  
“ confidence in her is too unbounded  
“ not to believe, that I shall be as  
“ much envied for her virtuous con-  
“ duct as for those external charms  
“ which

“ which must so justly give her a claim  
“ to general admiration.”

Do you not imagine, my dear madam, that this compliment smoothed my brow? Indeed it did. I thanked the dear youth, with a tender embrace, for that good opinion I hope ever to merit; and he afterwards acquainted me, that his uncle is busied in preparing an elegant house, in Manchester-square, for our reception. That worthy man interests himself so affectionately in whatever relates to the happiness of his beloved nephew, that I doubt not but we shall find every thing arranged as properly as if we were on the spot.

I must confess I shall with pleasure visit a city of which I have heard so much; but, though novelty may at first have charms, I am persuaded the country will ever have, for me, attractions that can never be equalled in a bustling metropolis. I shall pass some months in the year in London, because it is the wish of him whom it will be the study of my life to render happy; but Matlock and Shenstone-Grove will be the scenes in which I shall experience more serene delight than in any other spot in Europe; for none can afford such pleasure as that in which I have been reared by the most tender parents that ever child was blessed with, or one the vicinity of which will permit me to see them often.

I could

I could wish that our dear Selina would accompany us to town; but it is a request I cannot urge with propriety in such early days of mourning, especially as she is now circumstanced in regard to Miss Mostyn, who would by no means appear in London, and, if left alone at the Dale at this dreary season of the year, must, of course, become a prey to her own melancholy reflections, without the aid of society to remove them. Nor, I am convinced, would such a proposal be agreeable to Petwyn; who, though he will not, after our departure, (for prudence sake,) remain an inmate of the family, yet, as his sister will be there, he may, without any impropriety, be a frequent visitor, till that time arrives in which he is per-

mitted a claim still more tender than that of lover.

I am summoned to the tea-table. My Charles complains of my neglect; and, to appease him, I have a strong inclination to shew him my letter; but no, on second thoughts, it would be the introduction of a foolish custom. However, as a proof I am not deficient in all the duties of a wife, I shall give the first of my obedience in concluding this with the blended affection of

C. AND O. COSWAY.

LETTER

## LETTER XXV.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

**I**N a few days, my dear madam, you may expect to see us. We propose passing a day with you in our way to the Grove, where we shall stay no longer than to prepare for our journey to the metropolis.

Miss Petwyn has been with us a week; and, to describe how much we are all pleased with her, I need only tell

C 4

you,

you, that she possesses all the engaging qualifications of her brother.

Selina and she will be sisters more than by alliance; they appear to be so by nature. I shall leave my sweet friend with infinitely less regret than I should have done, did not the society of this lively engaging girl promise to fill the void which our absence will occasion. Lucy possesses an inexhaustible fund of innocent vivacity; her soft bosom seems never yet to have felt either the influence of love or grief, but her life has hitherto glided on

One pure unruffled stream of calm content.

Such a companion cannot fail of helping to dissipate that grief which is yet

yet too recent not to have still very powerful traces on the features of Selina, and seems to have tinctured all her conversation with a seriousness that a stranger might believe habitual; but, I flatter myself, the assiduities of a tender lover, and the society of two such agreeable friends as Harriet and Miss Petwyn, will soon restore her to her native cheerfulness; though I am convinced, by my own feelings, that such a loss must be severely felt, and nought but a pious resignation to the will of Providence can enable her to endure it calmly.

The Petwyns would have been here sooner, but were retarded by a fortunate accident; for such any one must be styled that does not greatly injure ourselves,

selves, and puts it in our power to assist others in extremity. That I allude to has something in it too particular not to be worth relating.

They had taken chaise, and were got some miles from the Manor, when the axle-tree of the carriage gave way, and our travellers were very decently laid in the mire, (for it was a cross-country road;) but happily received no other damage than their extreme fright and being comfortably bespattered with dirt.

They extricated themselves as well as they could from the shattered vehicle, which could proceed no farther without repairs; and, sending one of the servants forward, to the next village, for another

another carriage, they walked on, themselves, to a little hut in the road, thinking they might have an opportunity of drying their clothes, if it afforded no refreshment, which their fright, from the accident, rendered somewhat necessary.

While pursuing their course thither, in the most dirty plight, a horse appeared at a distance in the road, which, by the velocity of its flight, seemed to have run away with its rider, who, before the expiration of a minute, was thrown from his saddle, and, with his foot entangled in the stirrup, he must inevitably have met with that death which seemed to threaten him, had not Petwyn, with great humanity, and at the risk of his own life, run forwards, and,

opposing himself against the furious beast, caught hold of the bridle, and stopped his ungovernable course, but not before the unfortunate gentleman had received several contusions on his head, which for some yards had been dragged along the ground.

It was with difficulty that Petwyn disengaged him from the stirrup, as he appeared quite devoid of motion, and the impetuous beast could hardly be restrained; and, when released, (at first his preserver knew not whether from fear or injury,) he could not articulate a word, but, sinking on the ground, seemed to be breathing his expiring sighs.

At

At that instant Lucy joined them. She had seen the horse, on her brother's quitting his hold, bound forwards with his former swiftness; and then ventured to approach, in hopes of being useful in blending her humane attentions with those of her brother, who was then kneeling on the ground by the unhappy stranger, endeavouring to bring him to a sense of his safety, and praying heaven that he might prove to have been the happy instrument of preserving him from death.

Miss Petwyn soon perceived that he had only fainted through fatigue; and, by the time the chaise they had sent for had arrived, they had the satisfaction (with the assistance of volatiles) to see him

him able to rise, and, with their joint support, walk to the carriage, in which they seated him between them, and, when their luggage was adjusted, proceeded to the nearest town, thinking they should there be able to procure him what chirurgical relief his bruises might require.

All this, like the good Samaritan, they performed without knowing whether it was a peasant or a lord they had relieved; for his clothes, like their own, were so besmeared with dirt, that it would have been hard to have discovered of what they had originally been formed.

In their way to D\*\*\*, the stranger recovered himself sufficiently to inform  
them,

them, that he was a person of some property in a distant county, and was then on a journey to the metropolis, attended by his servant, who, just as the accident happened, had been sent back to fetch a small packet which had been inadvertently left at the inn where they slept the preceding night. What rendered the sudden impetuosity of the horse more wonderful was, that he had many years carried his master with the greatest docility, nor had ever before discovered the least propensity to those vicious tricks which many beasts are subject to.

There needed no inducement, to one of Petwyn's natural humanity, to render the task of alleviating distress a pleasing one; but, in serving this gentleman,

tleman, he declared he found peculiar satisfaction, because his name happened to be similar to that of his beloved Selina.

When they arrived at D\*\*\*, they stopped at the first commodious inn; and, Mr. Maynard being immediately put to bed, they procured him all necessary relief, and Miss Petwyn kindly officiated as his nurse. They determined to delay the farther prosecution of their journey till they saw him in a fair way of doing well; and, in the mean time, a letter was dispatched to his friend in town, acquainting him of what had happened, and desiring that the servant, as soon as he arrived, might be sent back to join his master at D\*\*\*.

In

In a few days they had the happiness to see him so much recovered, that he was able to sit up a great part of the day; and, from the cheerfulness he discovered, they had every reason to think he would soon be able to pursue his journey, as his bruises, though numerous, appeared only to be external; and they proposed to continue their's as soon as the arrival of his servant would permit them to think of leaving him, which they were unwilling to do entirely in the care of strangers.

At parting, Mr. Maynard presented each of them with a trifling token of his acknowledgement; (Lucy's was a snuff-box of pearl mounted in gold; her brother's a valuable seal with an elegant

elegant fancy-device; ) and he requested, at the same time, their address, that he might have the pleasure of sometimes enquiring after the health of his deliyerers.

Though the impatience of Petwyn to reach the spot which contained his treasure, and the curiosity of Lucy to see her intended sister, may well be conceived, yet they both declared, that they found themselves so interested in the welfare of this gentleman, that it was with the greatest pleasure they delayed that satisfaction a few days longer, to render him those benevolent services which they had the happiness to find so efficacious; for, at the time they left him, they had every reason to hope he would soon be able to leave the inn without

without any inconveniences from his recent accident.

How valuable are such considerate and humane propensions to benevolence, at an age when youth is generally borne along by its passions, and prefers its own peculiar gratifications to other people's ease! I quite adore these young humanists for the self-denial they practised on this occasion, as it conveys the most striking proofs of the goodness of their hearts; for, though there are many who delight in doing good, if the practice of humanity does not happen to clash with their own particular interest and satisfaction, yet there are few who will yield the important incitements of love and curiosity to contribute to the alleviation of a stranger's troubles.

troubles. Immediate assistance in distress, and good wishes for the future, are what every one, blessed with any degree of feeling, will bestow ; but a continuation of good offices, when self-gratifications call for their presence elsewhere, is what none but the most amiable and sympathetic hearts will offer; and such, I shall ever persuade myself, are their's, and am doubly happy to think my Selina has a prospect of being allied to a family as conspicuous for its mental worth as its more fading beauties.

Adieu, my dear madam. By the time this reaches your hands, we shall be on our way to Matlock. All our party unite in respectful compliments,  
and

and with the affectionate regards of your  
son-in-law are blended those of

Your happy daughter,

O. COSWAY.

LETTER

## LETTER XXVI.

MISS MOSTYN

TO

MRS. COSWAY.

ON her leaving these scenes of rural quiet, to visit the gay metropolis, I promised my dear Mrs. Cosway to become the amanuensis of Miss Maynard, (who, she laughingly said, would be better employed than in scribbling;) but, alas! my dear madam, little did I imagine I should have so disagreeable a subject, to begin our correspondence with; as that which must now employ my pen. Yet again is the painful task,  
of

of wounding your generous heart, appointed to your Harriet.

The happiness of our amiable friend is clouded by an event the most unexpected that you can possibly conceive. There now only remains the latter part of her prognostic-dream to be accomplished ; for the fates have already dispossessed her of those splendid gifts she inherited in right of an indulgent mother.

Some few mornings ago, she was looking over the wardrobe of her deceased parent, and, among other things, had been sorting some letters in an old India cabinet. One of the drawers, she found, did not shut properly ; and, on taking it quite out to

see

see what impeded it, discovered a paper, which, by some means, had slipped between the back of the cabinet and the drawer, and appeared to have been there for some years, as, by frequent pressure, it lay so close that it was much worn in the folds. Happy, for our dear Selina, had it been worn all over, so as to have been rendered unintelligible!

This blifs-destroying paper proved to be a will of her late father, (who was supposed to have died without one.) By this will, Mrs. Maynard was left sole executrix; but with the power only of giving her daughter one thousand pounds, on the day of her marriage, unless she married one who had been bred in her own persuasion; in which case, she might bestow on her what fortune

tune she thought proper, and bequeath to her the remainder of her effects at her decease; but, in failure of the above-mentioned condition, the one thousand pounds before mentioned were all she was to inherit, and the residue of Mrs. Maynard's possessions were to be assigned to the heir at law to the real estate. It was also particularly specified, that, if Selina were unmarried at the time of her mother's decease, she should, by her mother's last will, be bound down to the very same restrictions.

To this he added the most fervent wishes for the happiness of his child, to establish which, he declared, he was prompted to make the above conditions, well knowing that felicity is sel-

dom the lot of people who are united in heart and not in sentiment; for, though the first years of his marriage had been undisturbed, and Mrs. Maynard had in time affectionately embraced his faith, yet it was seldom, very seldom, that a difference of opinion, in matters of religion, did not produce an interruption of felicity. He therefore conjured his widow, as his last and most earnest request, early to point forth to their daughter the ill effects of forming a friendship for one of a different persuasion; and, that no one might be induced to tempt her to a deviation from his will, by the supposition of her possessing an affluent fortune, he desired that it might be generally known, among her acquaintance, that she would never possess it but on those ex-  
press

press conditions, which he hoped she would be so educated as to be as much inclined to fulfil from inclination and duty as more interested motives.

Much more was said on the subject, and withal inforced with the most earnest and tender entreaties, to Mrs. Maynard, to see fully executed; and it is more than probable, had that good lady lived to have discovered a will that had so many years lain concealed by accident, her conflicts, between her duty to a deceased beloved husband and tenderness to an amiable child, would have embittered, nay, perhaps shortened, her days. It is therefore happy that she rests in peace.

Reason and philosophy will, I hope, support Selina under this unexpected affliction, and direct her future conduct; but that, of seeing a parent constrained to treat her with unkindness, and oppose her inclination, would have been an evil too great for her tender nature to support.

Some people would have thought the evil not without redress, as no one knew of this long-concealed will but herself; but noble minds cannot stoop to clandestine actions, even to preserve their own felicity. Our friend could not; she cursorily ran over the fatal paper, then flew down stairs to the room where we were all sitting; and, throwing

ing herself into a seat next her lover's:

“ Ah! Petwyn,” cried she in the most affecting accents, “ thou must forget me; I can never now be thine. But, since the cruel destinies have so ordained it, I never will be another's!” A flood of tears succeeded these words.

Judge, my dear madam, of the general astonishment into which this exclamation threw us. All eyes were fixed upon her to read the cause of this sudden determination, while those of her lover were cast down upon the ground, and he exhibited the most desponding portrait it is possible to describe.

In a few minutes she assumed sufficient composure to acquaint us with the discovery she had made; and, giving the will to Petwyn, — “Read that,” cried she, “and tell me if I am not the  
“most unfortunate woman breathing?  
“but even that shall not prevent me  
“from fulfilling the last will of a parent. If I cannot comply fully with  
“the conditions, the person, whom  
“my father, in his zeal for my happiness, has fixed on for his heir,  
“shall not be deprived of his right  
“by any unfair advantages. Fortune  
“has now no charms for me, since I  
“am prohibited from enjoying it with  
“the object whom my heart adores and  
“my better reason approves. Hence-  
“forth I relinquish all claim to any  
“part

“ part of it but the thousand pounds  
“ allotted me. Five hundred of it al-  
“ ready have I bestowed where friend-  
“ ship prompted; with the remaining  
“ five hundred, if Harriet and I conti-  
“ nue to unite our interests, we may  
“ yet live decently. Nay, speak not,  
“ my friends,” (seeing us all going to  
oppose her romantic, yet honourable,  
determinations;) “ my plan is fixed.  
“ Petwyn, cease to supplicate.” (He  
was on his knees before her.) “ Of  
“ my unalterable affection rest assured;  
“ but I will not bring a beggar to thy  
“ arms. Of the sincerity of my  
“ esteem for thee thou oughtest to be  
“ assured, when thou beholdest me re-  
“ linquish all that affluence to which I  
“ have been accustomed, to convince  
“ thee of how little estimation are for-

“ tune’s gifts unless thou couldst parti-  
“ cipate them with me. After this de-  
“ termination, were I to continue in  
“ possession of what I have hitherto en-  
“ joyed in right of my parents, thou  
“ mightest justly think I preferred my  
“ fortune to my love ; as a proof I do  
“ not, I immediately yield it where my  
“ father’s will ordains. In point of  
“ equity, I have no longer any claim to  
“ it. It is true, I have not married  
“ contrary to the conditions mentioned  
“ in the will ; but nothing would pre-  
“ vent my doing so but the consciouf-  
“ ness of involving him I love in my  
“ misfortunes. To do and to intend a  
“ a thing are literally the same. Cir-  
“ cumstances restrain my conduct, but  
“ my wishes remain unalterable. In  
“ mind

" mind I am thine: can this fortune,  
" then, be mine?"

" Generous, noble-minded, girl!"  
cried the afflicted lover, " how much  
" do I applaud your sentiments in re-  
" spect to the resignation of your pos-  
" sessions! but why should that be ac-  
" companied with the resignation of  
" your happiness, if (as you flatter me)  
" it is centered in your Petwyn? Is  
" not your fortune a sufficient sacrifice,  
" but you must also sacrifice your love?  
" True, I am not burdened with the  
" gifts of Plutus; but I have yet a  
" competency sufficient to the happi-  
" ness of those who make not gold  
" their idol. Possessed only of my lit-  
" tle patrimonial estate and the love of  
" my Selina, I would not envy the fate

“ of monarchs. The plan of œcono-  
“ my, you have fixed on with Miss  
“ Mostyn, we will practise together;  
“ and content, more sweet than the  
“ Epicure’s richest cates, will render  
“ our little as inexhaustible as the wi-  
“ dow’s cuse, since all our felicity will  
“ be centered in each other.”

“ Ah! Petwyn, how pleasing are  
“ thy arguments in the ears of love!  
“ how futile in those of reason! Thou  
“ hast taken only the bright side of the  
“ prospect, while it remains for me to  
“ paint the dark one. Love is a gay  
“ embellisher; and, by the help of  
“ imagination, can illumine the most  
“ dreary scene. But there are yet more  
“ distant prospects; and, to cull the  
“ blossoms of the former, shall we en-  
“ counter

“ counter the thorns of the latter?  
“ Oeconomists in theory make some-  
“ times indifferent ones in practice;  
“ besides, œconomy is not compatible  
“ with lovers; mutual indulgence is  
“ natural, or the wish to promote it,  
“ which, from restraint, must produce  
“ unhappiness; and, if not restrained  
“ in time, even the abridgement of the  
“ most reasonable pleasures must suc-  
“ ceed, and present gratifications be  
“ followed by future want. The idea  
“ of love and a cottage is often more  
“ pleasing, to an infatuated imagina-  
“ tion, than the most splendid man-  
“ sion; but, to relish its charms, it is  
“ necessary we should have been born  
“ to a cottage, or even the powerful  
“ charm of novelty cannot long re-  
“ commend it. I am convinced I

“ could be happy any where with thee,  
“ if, by enjoying that felicity, I were  
“ not the means of condemning thee to  
“ a sphere far too circumscribed for thy  
“ merit. While single, the paths of  
“ advancement are every where open to  
“ youth ; when married, they general-  
“ ly close, and nothing remains but to  
“ sit down contented in whatever sphere  
“ they then happen to move. A little  
“ income becomes less by participa-  
“ tion. Matrimony and its attendant  
“ expences (consequently attendant  
“ cares) despoil the hymeneal bower of  
“ all its roses. The mist vanishes from  
“ before those eyes which experience  
“ has rendered clear ; and, though  
“ there may yet remain sufficient affec-  
“ tion to restrain the mental uneasiness  
“ (which each must suffer) from beco-  
“ ming

“ ming an open violater of repose, yet  
“ will its internal gnawings impercepti-  
“ bly undermine it; and, when too  
“ late, both lament the fatal weakness  
“ into which their inconsiderate passion  
“ has hurried them.

“ Carry the prospect still farther.  
“ Behold a growing family, (perhaps a  
“ numerous one,) without any source  
“ from which to draw their future pro-  
“ vision in life, and, from the narrow-  
“ ness of their parents' income, depriv-  
“ ed of those advantages of education  
“ which might enable them to find a  
“ source within themselves.

“ Here will I stop. Imagination  
“ cannot paint a more gloomy portrait,  
“ yet my reason tells me there cannot  
“ be

“ be a more just one, of an union such  
“ as our’s would be under our present  
“ circumstances. Yes, one question I  
“ must add. Tell me, Petwyn, if, in  
“ thy most reflecting hours, before the  
“ image of the unfortunate Selina  
“ Maynard awakened thy affections,  
“ wouldst thou have formed an idea of  
“ taking a wife without a fortune?  
“ nay, would not such a conduct, even  
“ in any of thy friends, have excited  
“ thy pity for their imprudence, and,  
“ in the eyes of discretion, their folly  
“ have been evident? Dear as thou  
“ art, and ever must be, to my heart,  
“ yet my affection does not render me  
“ blind to the painful consequences of  
“ such an inauspicious marriage. The  
“ pleadings of love are strong; but  
“ the whisperings of reason plead as  
“ loudly.

“ loudly. Henceforth we must be  
“ friends; and what so horrid in the  
“ idea? We may see each other; thy  
“ happiness will ever be dear to me,  
“ and the consciousness of its being so  
“ ought to establish it. Friendship has  
“ its joys as well as love; and a con-  
“ duct that is dictated by reason, how-  
“ ever painful at first, will, in time,  
“ become far less so.

“ I am sensible I might avoid the sa-  
“ crifice I am going to make, as no  
“ one but the present company is yet  
“ acquainted with a will that places  
“ such an invincible barrier to an union  
“ on which all my hopes of happiness  
“ were placed; but, because the desti-  
“ nies are cruel, shall I be unjust?  
“ No; though this will was never wit-  
“ nessed

“ neffed by any but the writer, I look  
“ upon it quite as binding as if execu-  
“ ted according to the ftrictest forms of  
“ law; and my heart, while wounded  
“ by its contents, tells me I ought as  
“ religiously to adhere to them.”

“ Rigid virtue ! ” exclaims Petwyn,  
no longer able to contain his emotions,  
“ that prompts us to embrace unhappi-  
“ nefs ! It fhould be the province of  
“ vice only to render its votaries  
“ wretched. Alas ! what have I done  
“ to deferve this difappointment ?  
“ And you, my amiable Selina, why  
“ has heaven deftined you to this cruel  
“ proof of your duty, while it has  
“ formed you with a heart fufceptible  
“ of thofe impreffions that render the  
“ practice of it fo destructive of your  
“ felicity ?

“ felicity ? But I must submit ; I see  
“ too plainly my fate is sealed. Howe-  
“ ver, let me on my knees intreat not  
“ to be made the instrument of your  
“ unhappiness. The arguments you  
“ have offered, to convince me of the  
“ indiscretion of an union under our  
“ unhappy circumstances, have their  
“ full weight with me, for they are too  
“ just to be opposed. Never till now  
“ did I curse the niggardliness of for-  
“ tune, in ordaining me to such a scan-  
“ ty pittance ; but why should even  
“ this cruel stroke prompt you to sacri-  
“ fice your possessions ? is it not enough  
“ to sacrifice your felicity ? It must  
“ not be, indeed, my Selina ; I can-  
“ not suffer you to attempt an act that  
“ all the world must deem an act of  
“ madness. Far from all my soul  
“ holds

“ holds dear, I will endeavour to find  
“ some alleviation to my sorrows in  
“ thinking that my absence will in  
“ time restore me to serenity. Conti-  
“ nue to live, as you have hitherto  
“ done, blessing, and blessed by, all  
“ around you. If wealth produces us  
“ no personal satisfaction, the pleasure  
“ of doing good is too valuable a pos-  
“ session to be resigned merely from a  
“ pique at the cruel dispensations of  
“ Providence.”

“ It is in vain,” replied Miss May-  
nard, with a voice almost stifled with  
the violence of her emotions, (while  
Miss Petwyn and myself were moved  
beyond expression at the affecting  
scene,) “ to plead against a plan which  
“ no arguments, however powerful,  
“ ever

“ ever can dissuade me from. Had the  
“ power of doing good been designed  
“ me as a perpetual blessing, it would  
“ not have been accompanied by such a  
“ cruel prohibition. In future I trans-  
“ fer it to another. Were I to retain  
“ it, after knowing the conditions, I  
“ should look upon it as a bribe to re-  
“ linquish the object of my love.”

Had you, my dear Mrs. Cofway,  
been witness to the various arguments  
which were offered by these amiable lo-  
vers : those of Selina to shew her con-  
tempt of affluence unshared by the ob-  
ject of her affection, and those of Pet-  
wyn to prevail on her not to spurn those  
gifts to which she had a natural right,  
averring that he should ever be misera-  
ble to know himself the source of such  
a sacrifice :

a sacrifice: you would not have known which to have admired most, but pity for both would have absorbed your soul.

Selina continued resolute; nor could all the plaints and tears of the kneeling suppliant make any impression but those of the tenderest sorrow on her afflicted heart. Her determination, she protested, was as unalterable as her love, and that she would cherish till time should be no more. "Yet never shall even that," said she with energy, "prompt me to involve the object of it in my misfortunes, or wound his heart by thinking that the world has aught to offer me valuable enough for me to accept as a compensation for the loss of him."

In

In vain we all united our intreaties, endeavouring to persuade her that there was an essential difference between being bribed to an act contrary to the inclination and retaining what was already her own. But all was in vain ; and I will acknowledge, that her stability, instead of paining, would have charmed me, had it not been for the affliction I knew it must convey to her lover, and his sister, whose tender disposition renders her a warm participater of his woes ; for I cannot sufficiently admire a conduct, that my heart approves, though I might not, perhaps, under similar circumstances, have the heroism strictly to imitate it ; for the pleadings of a beloved object would, I fear, be more effectual than those of reason, aided by all the  
bugbears

bugbears of futurity which prudence could conjure up.

Never more shall we again meet at Castle-Dale; but our noble-minded friend, though she quits the mansion in which she has passed the happy days of youth, is yet too warmly attached to the place of her nativity to desert it wholly. We are looking out for some snug little house, in the environs of the town, more adapted to the narrow sphere in which she in future means to move, and have already furnished it, in idea, quite in the cottage-style. All the noble furniture at the Dale is to remain in *statu quo*; not a moveable will she take with her but her own and her parent's wardrobe, with some trifling pieces of plate she has been accustomed

to look upon as her own from childhood. Nay, she has even had some severe conflicts, between equity and inclination, before she could resolve to look upon as her property the rich India cabinets in which the wearables of her deceased parent have been always kept; but those too-delicate scruples I have, by reasonings, conquered, as I am convinced she sets a higher estimation on them than any other part of the furniture; yet, much as she values them for the sake of their late revered owner, this dear romantic girl declares, she would not take even their contents, but that she could not bear to see what has been the peculiar property of a beloved parent tossed over by the rude hand of strangers, by whom they would probably be looked upon with indifference,

rence, while, to her, the minutest article is inestimable, from the sole reflection of its once being her's.

She has written to the heir at law, (whom, it seems, she has never seen, but whose address, from some letters she has found among her writings, she is well acquainted with.) In her letter she acquaints him of her intended resignation; declaring that, from certain conditions in her father's will, she is incapacitated from enjoying his effects, which, in case of failure, devolve to him; and, without the slightest hint of her motives, (which, in point of delicacy, she has omitted,) desires he will repair immediately to N\*\*\*\*\* to take possession, as she is impatient to retire to  
a little

a little retreat more adapted to her circumstances.

I know not what kind of disposition heaven has bestowed on the person Mr. Maynard appointed as his provisional successor, (nor, probably, did he know himself;) but, I am convinced, if he possesses not a soul devoid of sentiment, he cannot, when he comes to be acquainted with the motives of this voluntary resignation, prevail on himself to become inferior, in point of generosity, to her who treats with such indifference that wealth which cannot make her happy; but twenty thousand pounds in specie, and valuables to a considerable amount, are gifts few would be able to refuse; and, should he happen to be so noble-minded a being,

it is a doubt with me, whether the scrupulous and conscientious delicacy of our friend would permit her to profit by his generosity.

Petwyn hears all our preparative plans, for quitting this delightful abode, with a countenance expressive of the deepest sorrow, yet, seeing her resolved, offers not to oppose them; but I fear it will be long ere he can bring himself to think of her Platonic scheme with that degree of composure which the dear girl herself endeavours to assume; a serenity, alas! I greatly fear, that plays only on the features, while her heart is in private a prey to the severest discontent, and, from being constrained, is more prejudicial to her health

health than the strongest signs of external grief.

Lucy weeps from morn to eve. A worthy and justly-beloved brother, precipitated from the heights of bliss to the lowest abyss of misery, is an event that must long damp her happiness; and, though he ceases to supplicate for himself, she becomes a suppliant for him, and aims, by the most eloquent persuasion, to divert Selina from her purpose, and induce her to share his little with him. But, while Miss Maynard professes her to her bosom, and calls her her dear sister, a title she declares she will never yield, yet she declares as firmly, that nothing shall deter her from the prosecution of a plan constructed more to promote his felicity than her own;

and, instead of attempting to oppose it, conjures the afflicted Lucy, if she values her brother's happiness, to employ all her eloquence in persuading him of its propriety, and soothe him, by every argument, to that serenity of mind which has been so cruelly interrupted.

In complaisance to her Selina, Lucy undertakes the arduous task. A faint smile illumines his dejected features at the ardour with which she espouses a cause in which her heart cannot acquiesce. For some moments he listens calmly to her well-meant reasonings; then, recollecting his hopeless situation, breaks into an agony of passion, accuses fate with bitterness, and prays for total annihilation, or a speedy restoration of  
of

of those delightful prospects which this unexpected event has so fatally darkened.

This, my dear madam, is the gloomy scene this once-happy mansion presents. Petwyn this morning received a letter, acquainting him that his presence is necessary in town, on some business relative to a law-suit. He can neither go nor stay; but that duty and respect, he has ever shewn his mother, will soon bring him to a determination. Lucy has written to Mrs. Petwyn an account of this unexpected interruption to her brother's happy prospects, and trembles for the effect of such a disappointment on a mind so tenderly attached to her children's happiness. She leaves us, in a few days, to console her

parent ; but promises to return as soon we are settled in our proposed retreat.

An interruption. Presently I will resume my pen.

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I would not close this till Petwyn had resolved on his journey to the metropolis. You will see this afflicted lover in a few days ; he sets off to-morrow. Comfort him, dear madam ; recommend to him that patience and resignation his situation so peculiarly requires as an addition to the many virtues he already possesses. Persuade him, that

“ Whatever is right.”

When

When misfortunes are inevitable, it is the best argument we can use; before they are so, perhaps the worst, as it prevents a proper exertion towards avoiding them.

Mr. Lutwidge knows nothing of these unhappy revolutions at the Dale. Our sweet friend, who before, all timidity, would not venture on the most trifling arrangement without his advice, has declined consulting him on this important one. Persuaded he would condemn this romantic resignation of her fortune, she will not expose herself to his arguments, which, on every other subject, she declares she should look upon as her surest guide to propriety; but, conscious that on this they would be in-

effectual, she is willing to spare him the mortification of being refused, and herself of being condemned for an act which both her reason and heart approve, though, in the eyes of the unprejudiced, it may probably appear an act of madness.

How happy should I be, were it possible to be the invisible bearer of this! To embrace my dear Mrs. Cosway, wing my way to Pall-Mall, and steal one glance at my deluded parent, though a transient, would be an inexpressible satisfaction; but to know that he is well, that he is happy, is all I should desire.

I would not exchange the serene delights of friendship and retirement for  
all

all the pleasures with which the world of gaiety abounds. It could now have no attractions; nay, it never had but one; and that one, alas! is lost, for ever lost, to the ill-fated Harriet! and *how* lost is a secret, I fear, it will never be permitted me to unravel. Ah! can I doubt the source? all but that I could have forgiven her. But shall I presume to repine, who have before me such a pattern of patible virtues? no, the past must be forgotten in contemplation of the present. Heaven has deprived me of a lover, but it has raised me friends: shall I abuse the gift by fruitless and ill-timed complaints, and throw a gloom over those hearts whom it should be my duty to enliven? forbid it, gratitude! — Hence! all selfish ideas: to pour the balm of consolation into the bosom of

my Selina is an object more worthy my attention than a futile retrospection of past misfortunes.

Among my present satisfactions, I hope my dear Mrs. Cofway will believe, that one of my greatest will never cease to be that of subscribing myself, with unlimited friendship and sincerity,

Her devoted

HARRIET MOSTYN.

LETTER

## LETTER XXVII.

MRS. COSWAY

TO

MISS MAYNARD.

Manchester-Square.

Dearest Selina,

**I**S it possible this cruel revolution, which Harriet writes to me of, and our friend's dejected countenance too fully confirms, is really come to pass? Dear romantic, yet noble-minded, girl! though I lament the cause, I cannot sufficiently applaud your spirit; but, though you spurn that wealth you can enjoy but from the sacrifice of your

E 6

happiness,

happiness, I cannot consent that you should bury yourself in a situation so ill adapted to your generous sentiments, so little calculated to disperse that gloom which recent misfortunes must naturally throw over your heart. Come, and repose your griefs on the bosom of your Octavia; and, by a moderate participation of those pleasures which court our acceptance, let us chase away present sorrows, and look forward to happier prospects. To Harriet I know such an invitation would be useless, or she would be included in it; but, though prohibited from accompanying you to London, she is not confined to Nottingham, and her society would be a treasure to my mother. Thus, by a compliance with my request, the happiness of two families, whom you esteem,

esteem, would be considerably enhanced. What argument more persuasive can I offer to one who reckons the pleasures of friendship among her first enjoyments? Yes, I have one still more powerful: the felicity of a lover who adores you; who pines not so much for his disappointment as the misfortunes to which his ill-fated passion has condemned you; and never can recover his serenity while conscious that he has been the fatal instrument of depriving you of happiness, and conducting you to a sphere of life so unworthy of your merit. The loss of your heart could only be to him a greater affliction than what he already labours under from your intended sacrifice. How do I sympathise in his unhappiness! Personal sufferings are trivial, compared to that of involving

volving a beloved object in our troubles. Selina, self-banished from the Eden of her youth, wanting all those luxuries in which she has been accustomed to be indulged, must always be present to his fancy, and the ghost of your departed splendour ever haunting his imagination, accusing him continually as the murderer of your peace.

If you will not adopt the system of love and a cottage, permit the hand of friendship to strew some flowers in your path, till time and the interest of friends have transformed the cottage into a mansion more deserving your acceptance. Our good uncle, who is happy only in proportion as he contributes to the happiness of others, has  
much

much interest at court, and undertakes to be the builder.

A genteel appointment under government, added to the little income our friend already possesses, will, I hope, soon leave no room for pecuniary objections.

“My Petwyn a court-dependent!” you cry; “cringing for those favours he would not be condemned to sue for but on my account! I cannot bear it.” These, I know, will be your sentiments; but do not, my Selina, carry your ideas of independence too far. It is as possible to err from excess of delicacy as from the want of it. Because fate presents us not happiness just in the form we wish it, shall we refuse

fuse it in the shape it offers? Believe me, there is nothing so horrid, in the species of dependence proposed, as to shock the nicest scrupulist. Your lover will not become the fawning sycophant of proud men in office to attain this addition to his fortune; nor, when attained, will it constrain him to sacrifice his integrity and that exalted sense of honour which now renders him the admiration of his friends. He will, merely through the extensive interest of Shenstone, (if the success of his application is answerable to our expectations,) enjoy a lucrative place under government, without being constrained to prostitute his sentiments, or sacrifice much of that time, in his attendance on the minister, which his inclinations

clinations would lead him to pass in domestic happiness.

We have already communicated our plan for the re-establishment of his felicity; but, though it is natural for the drowning even to catch at twigs, he dares not take hold of our branch of consolation and approaching hope, till your approbation has permitted him to look forward to the prospect we have opened.

Such a plan, should it succeed, (and, till it does, all our wishes center only in the power of diverting your gloomy thoughts by friendship and society,) will not in the least interfere with your natural love of retirement. The environs of London afford some delightful spots ;

spots ; though not so romantic as your favourite rocks, yet diversified with all the luxuriant beauties of sportive nature ; and, from their vicinity to the metropolis, they have this advantage over more distant parts, that you may intersperse the pleasures of rural life with the innocent gaieties of the town, and, by a constant succession of rational amusements, find not a chasm in time, or a single moment hang heavy on your hands.

You are an admirer of dramatic performances, I know, though hitherto precluded from being a spectator of them. Here they are to be enjoyed to perfection's height. To weep with Siddons is a luxury no feeling heart would willingly forego ; and to smile,

or

or even laugh, with Abington, is not unworthy Wisdom's self, nay, even of the Graces, though a certain noble lord has endeavoured to banish laughter, by attaching to it such an idea of vulgarity, that risibility cannot now be indulged without an evident offence against good breeding; and that attention to the *mœurs* he recommends even more strongly than the virtues; but, which is a study most worthy, a little share of discernment, I think, suffices to determine.

In compliance with the wishes of him, whose desires to procure me happiness and amusement are as unlimited as his affection, I have once visited every place of public entertainment; but I must confess I can find none, but the theatres.

theatres, worthy the admiration of a rational mind, or where we can spend our time with any hopes of improvement, which, I think, should be the chief aim of all public representations.

A masquerade appears to me, of all others, the most irrational species of amusement. It is a confused assemblage of people, who, as on the day of Pentecost, all converse in other tongues, and, under the sanction of a mask, utter a thousand follies and impertinences they would be ashamed to utter without one. What satisfaction they can derive, from paying an extravagant sum for such a licence to folly and absurdity, is beyond my sagacity to discover. The vitiated mind may find a pleasure  
in

in it, because it gives a larger scope to their licentious disposition; but, the amiable and good, what attractions can it have for them? merely because it is the fashion. But the sway of fashion will, I think, never be so predominant over my conduct, as to reconcile me to mix with such company, out of my own house, as I would be ashamed to admit into it. Yet so it is with the votaries of dissipation. The titled and the untitled, women of character and women of no character at all, men of fortune and sharpers, the lettered and the unlettered, peers and plebeians, are all indiscriminately jumbled together; and every one, who has money to procure a ticket and a mask, are admitted, without distinction, to this temple of folly and intemperance; which, to innocence and beauty,

beauty, must, I am convinced, abound with as many dangers as those which besieged the heart of Telemachus in the Cyprian isles.

After this avowal of my sentiments, you will believe that I do not intend to become a frequent visitor of the Pantheon's splendid round: once for curiosity; once more, perhaps, to confirm me in my aversion to an amusement that has nothing rational to recommend it. Give me those pleasures which reason must approve, and which lose not their lustre by reflection. Such are those we experience in seeing a well-performed tragedy, calculated to awaken every slumbering virtue; but I was ever an enthusiastic admirer of Melpomene; nor have the beauties of Thalia, when  
modestly

modestly delineated, fewer charms. The theatres, therefore, bid fair to become, with me, formidable rivals to every other place of public amusement.

Come, my dear Selina, and participate in the happiness of your friends. Gladden the heart of your desponding lover, by permitting him to hope for the future attainment of that felicity which at present is denied him; and, by yielding your approbation to our plan, aid him to conquer those difficulties which now oppose your union, which he will never have resolution to attempt while depressed with the idea of the joyless state to which his love has doomed you.

We

We shall return to Shenstone-Grove early in the spring. You will there rejoin Miss Mostyn; and, if your abode with us becomes unpleasing to yourself, it will then be time enough to think of your proposed retreat. Harriet will, I know, enforce my persuasions; she is too amiable to let any selfish considerations withhold her from aiming to promote the happiness of her friend. In the society of my mother, if she does not find sufficient felicity to compensate for the loss of your's, yet she will find all that sincerity of friendship, that invincible amability of disposition, that will leave her no room to regret her situation with Mrs. Lutwidge, who has already been taught to love her from description.

The

The little apartment I used to occupy (which my tender parent avers she cannot pass without a sigh) will again resume its cheerful aspect; and a youthful companion, though it is not her Octavia, will restore to her those satisfactions, of which, by my absence, she must have been greatly deprived.

I shall not enjoy perfect serenity till I have the happiness of learning that each of you is preparing for your respective journies. This arrangement is earnestly wished for by us all; love and friendship unite in courting you to compliance, and a refusal would throw a general damp upon our spirits.

Assure Harriet of my unalterable friendship, as a proof of which I hope she will esteem this proposal; and believe me, with the warmest attachment of which a friend is capable,

My dear Selina's

Most affectionate

OCTAVIA.

LETTER

## LETTER XXVIII.

MISS MOSTYN

TO

MRS. COSWAY.

**R**EJOICE with me, dear madam! our beloved friend will not be unhappy. Fate, less cruel in its decrees than he who gave her birth, is about to restore her possessions through a channel she little expected.

I had, by the most persuasive arguments, at length prevailed on her to accept your friendly invitation; and my joy, to find them successful, was blend-

ed with the warmest gratitude to heaven for the rich gift of two such inestimable friends as Mrs. Cofway and Miss Maynard.

We were in actual preparation for our departure from this place, in which, since the fatal discovery of her father's will, Selina has merely looked upon herself as a tenant; and waited only for the arrival of her successor to put our design in execution.

The day before yesterday, a post-chaise stopped at the gate; and out stepped (or rather was lifted) a middle-aged gentleman, apparently labouring under some lingering disease, and with all the signs of approaching dissolution depicted in his languid countenance. While

we

we were wondering what could bring this extraordinary visitor, unless he took the house for that of a physician, he was ushered by Mary into the breakfast-parlour; and, desiring to see Miss Maynard, accosted her with a familiarity that quite surprised us.

“ You see before you, madam,” said he, “ a man verging apace towards  
“ eternity, and who has accustomed  
“ himself to meet death without a terror. My days have not been many,  
“ but, till within these few months,  
“ have been serene, because unclouded  
“ with those various turns of fortune,  
“ that elate some part of the world,  
“ and depress others. The refined  
“ joys of friendship, the purer pleasures  
“ of love, and the exquisite  
F 3 “ glowings

“ glowings of gratitude, were senti-  
“ ments I was totally unacquainted  
“ with : in a word, I existed in a neu-  
“ tral state of happiness, firmly persua-  
“ ded, that in a comfortable inde-  
“ pendence were included all the blef-  
“ sings of life. As to the mutual  
“ good offices, which attach mankind  
“ to each other, and form the bonds of  
“ society, it made no part of my felici-  
“ ty. I would not knowingly have  
“ done any one an injury ; nor, at  
“ the expence of my own satisfaction,  
“ do I believe I should have exerted  
“ myself to have done them good. I  
“ lived for myself, and supposed that  
“ every other person did the same.

“ An accident, that happened to me  
“ some time since, and which will  
“ shortly

“ shortly put a period to my existence,  
“ convinced me of my error, and open-  
“ ed to my view joys of which before I  
“ had not the least conception. Too  
“ late I discovered, that the reflections,  
“ arising from having done no injury  
“ to mankind, were productive of very  
“ inferior satisfaction to those of ha-  
“ ving contributed to their wel-  
“ fare.

“ The heavenly disposition of those,  
“ whom Providence sent to rescue me  
“ from a premature and shocking  
“ death, shewed me I had been defi-  
“ cient in every Christian virtue, and  
“ inspired me with sentiments I had ne-  
“ ver before experienced.

“ Should I have done so, thought  
“ I, without knowing whether I should  
“ ever be repaid? No; but the plea-  
“ sure, expressed in their countenance,  
“ shews me that the practice of huma-  
“ nity is its own recompense; and,  
“ should heaven see fit to spare my life,  
“ it shall henceforth be devoted to those  
“ noble purposes in which I have hi-  
“ therto been very deficient.

“ From these amiable young people  
“ I learned the duties of humanity;  
“ from you, Miss Maynard, I have ac-  
“ quired the nicest ideas of honour;  
“ alas! to little purpose, since I have  
“ but a short time to enjoy these new-  
“ born sentiments! but a little, pro-  
“ perly made use of, may atone for a  
“ large

“ large portion that has been mis-  
“ spent.

“ You see before you the man ap-  
“ pointed as your successor to that for-  
“ tune you so nobly contemn. After  
“ receiving your extraordinary letter,  
“ even the weakened state of my  
“ health could not deter me from the  
“ resolution of seeing a young lady,  
“ who, from a conscientious scruple,  
“ could calmly give up the affluence to  
“ which she had been accustomed,  
“ when, from a suppression of the will  
“ and its conditions, she might have  
“ enjoyed it uninterruptedly through  
“ life. It appeared to me a phænome-  
“ non of honour rarely exhibited in ei-  
“ ther sex, but more particularly in that

“ which so generally is infatuated with  
“ vanity and splendour.

“ The acquisition of such a treasure  
“ would, some time since, have been  
“ the greatest addition to my happiness ; nor, restrained by any scruples  
“ of delicacy, should I have refused the  
“ proffered possessions, merely contenting myself with being a favourite  
“ of fortune, no matter at whose expence I became so. But, in my humanized state of mind, I saw the affair in a different point of view.  
“ Had it happened in some former day,  
“ I should have sent my steward to take  
“ possession of the effects, nor troubled  
“ myself to enquire from what motives  
“ you resigned them before claimed.  
“ But my ideas were changed ; honour  
“ and

“ and benevolence had usurped the  
“ throne of interest, and to confer a fa-  
“ vour appeared to me a greater plea-  
“ sure than to receive it.

“ I prepared for my journey, deter-  
“ mined, if my strength permitted me,  
“ to pay you a visit, and learn your  
“ reasons for this extraordinary resigna-  
“ tion. I recollected that Wheatly-  
“ Manor was not far out of my way,  
“ and resolved to take it in my road,  
“ that I might have once more the sa-  
“ tisfaction of embracing the humane  
“ young people by whose attentions my  
“ thread of life had been extend-  
“ ed.”

“ Then my Lucy and her brother  
“ were the persons sent by kind Provi-  
F 6 “ dence

“ dence to thy relief !” interrupted So-  
lina, breathless with her emotions.

“ They were indeed, madam. Mr.  
“ Petwyn was not at home on my arri-  
“ val at the Manor ; but his sister re-  
“ ceived me with that benignity of  
“ countenance that speaks so forcibly  
“ the goodness of her heart ; yet, on  
“ finding the weak condition to which I  
“ was reduced, from some internal  
“ hurt that occasions a continual spit-  
“ ting of blood, she condemned me  
“ greatly for coming out at such an in-  
“ clement season, when the restoration  
“ of my health should have been my  
“ only care.

“ When I acquainted her with the  
“ extraordinary business that drew me  
“ out,

“ out, and, taking your letter from my  
“ pocket, presented it to her for perusal:

“ ‘ Gracious heaven!’ cried she,  
“ lifting up her hands in admiration,  
“ ‘ how inscrutable are the ways of  
“ Providence! My Selina, then, I  
“ hope, will yet be happy. Oh! sir,  
“ did you know that lovely, noble-  
“ minded, young lady, you would  
“ adore her; but, alas! all her beau-  
“ ty, all her merit, does not exempt  
“ her from unhappiness.’

“ ‘ Miss Maynard is your friend,  
“ then! How fortunate I called here!  
“ You can perhaps inform me by what  
“ motives she is actuated to a conduct,  
“ that excites my astonishment while it  
“ claims my admiration.’

“ An

“ An *éclaircissement* then ensued.  
“ Miss Petwyn painted her brother’s  
“ passion, and the merit of its object,  
“ in the most lively colours ; colours,  
“ that, I am convinced, are genuine,  
“ though drawn by the partial hand of  
“ friendship and affection ; and, while  
“ she lamented the discovery that ob-  
“ scured his happy prospects, owned  
“ that your conduct on the occasion had  
“ heightened her esteem ; and, though  
“ fate denied her at present the satis-  
“ faction of such a sister, in that en-  
“ dearing light she should ever think of  
“ Miss Maynard, till totally precluded  
“ from all hopes of her becoming so.  
“ She then acquainted me with your  
“ intended plan of retirement, and the  
“ persuasions which had been made use  
“ of

“ of to divert you from it ; and that,  
“ constrained to relinquish his hopes of  
“ present happiness, her brother was  
“ then in London attending the event  
“ of a tedious law-suit ; but no change  
“ of scene, or length of time, she was  
“ conscious, would ever restore him to  
“ tranquillity, while the idea of having  
“ destroyed your’s arose momentarily  
“ to his mind.

“ After this account of our conversa-  
“ tion, you will perceive, my dear  
“ young lady, that there was nothing  
“ for me to learn ; but there was much  
“ for me to do. My lease of life is al-  
“ most out ; and my heirs have not  
“ those ties of gratitude which I have to  
“ attach them to your interest. While  
“ the power of communicating happi-  
“ ness

“ness is allowed me, let me hasten to  
“enjoy it.

“To satisfy your delicacy, I accept  
“of your possessions, — to bestow them  
“on your lover, — a gift too little for the  
“service he has rendered me; and, to  
“make it more worthy his acceptance,  
“I will, at my death, divide between  
“him and his sister all I possess besides.  
“If, after this, you prefer your plan of  
“retirement, I have no arguments  
“more weighty to plead against it;  
“but, I am of opinion, there need ve-  
“ry few to persuade you to accept of  
“proffered happiness, when no breach  
“either of your honour or your duty  
“will ensue. But, lest the power of  
“conferring it should not long be  
“mine, let me intreat that you will  
“send

“ send immediately for your lawyer;  
“ and, when the deeds are executed,  
“ we may at leisure discuss the  
“ rest.”

The gratitude of our lovely friend can only be conceived by knowing the felicity she received from this generous declaration; nor did mine fall far short of her's; but there was no time for its heart-felt effusion. Mr. L\*\*\* was sent for, and the proposed transfer ratified according to the proper forms of law; after which we prevailed on Mr. Maynard to take some refreshment, and rest himself from the fatigue of his journey; for, what with that and an unusual exertion of spirits, he appeared so very much exhausted and overcome, that we trembled lest this generous action, from  
the

the emotions it excited, should precipitate an event, which, from his declining state, we have too much cause to fear is not very far distant.

Wishing to soften the last moments of a life, the remains of which have been devoted to the establishment of her happiness, Miss Maynard has employed all her eloquence in prevailing on the poor gentleman to continue at the Dale, till either a happy change in his health, or weather less injurious to his weakened constitution, admits of travelling with more ease; and the satisfaction he experiences, in her soothing attentions, has not left him the power to refuse.

This

This generous friend is with us then, and, most probably, will never leave us till conveyed to his last awful home; for, sorry am I to say, there is little hope of a recovery. To amuse or alleviate is all that is in our power; to relieve, alas! is not permitted us.

Selina has written to her lover, and to Miss Petwyn also. Both, I hope, by this time, are on their way to Nottingham; for the society of his amiable deliverers will, I doubt not, be as soothing to our poor invalid as to us, who have never ceased lamenting the loss of it.

You see, my dear madam, there is now little prospect of a necessity for  
changing

changing my situation at present, as Miss Maynard declares she cannot think of parting with me till after she has resigned all title to that name. When such a happy event has taken place, I shall, with pleasure, accept the asylum your friendship offers me; and it will be the first satisfaction of my life to amuse the hours of your worthy parent, though it never can be in my power to compensate for those satisfactions she has been deprived of, in losing the society of a daughter, to whom the title of friend will ever be deemed the highest distinction that can possibly be bestowed on the grateful

HARRIET MOSTYN.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIX.

MRS. COSWAY

TO

MISS MOSTYN.

Manchester-Square.

MY \* last letter afforded little more than a repetition of those sincere professions of friendship and good wishes that must ever be the genuine dictates of a heart on which time or distance can work no change; professions, which my present situation will not, for some

\* These letters were omitted, as immaterial in the chain of the history.

some time, permit me to make in person, as my dear Charles (who interests himself in the minutest article that relates to my happiness and safety) will not hear of our leaving London till after a certain dreaded event ; but, to console me for the deprivation of embracing my friends, will accompany me to the Dale as soon as my health is sufficiently re-established to admit of traveling.

The most tender of parents, though nothing could before reconcile her to the idea of a journey to the metropolis, could not think of leaving her Octavia to the care of strangers in the hour of danger, and has written to acquaint me that she proposes being with us the beginning of next month. You may judge,

judge, my dear Harriet, how happy this letter has made me! for, though her presence, at that awful period, was the wish nearest my heart, it was a wish I forbore to express from her known aversion to London; but there are certain circumstances in life, that, if they do not alter our inclinations, prevail on us to sacrifice them when the happiness of those dearest to us is their object.

When the marriage of our Selina takes place, which, I imagine, will not be soon, (unless the wishes of a dying friend, to behold their happiness ere he closes the scene of life, should prevail on them to waive the ceremony of staying till after his decease,) my dear mother bids me assure you she shall be  
happy

happy to receive you ; but I am of opinion, Harriet, that her happiness, on the subject of your society, will be of short continuance ; for, as no novels, they say, are complete without a wedding, the *finale* of your's waits only for your second introduction to a certain agreeable baronet to be accomplished.

“ A certain baronet ! ” you cry ;  
“ why you talk in parables, Octavia.”  
Allowed, Harriet ; but I will unravel them if you will have patience. About a week since, we dined at Sir Walter Bootle's, an agreeable family, to which we were introduced by Petwyn, who still lives in that amity with Sir Walter that subsisted between them when they were fellow-students.

After

After dinner, I observed the attention of his sisters incessantly directed towards the door, as if expecting (every time it opened) the *entrée* of some interesting object. At length, with her accustomed gaiety, Charlotte exclaimed :

“ When, when, brother, will this  
“ *rara avis* make his appearance? my  
“ curiosity by far outstrips my pa-  
“ tience, and the latter is very near  
“ exhausted. You must know, my  
“ dear Mrs. Cofway,” (turning to me,)  
“ we have, all this day, anticipated the  
“ arrival of a distant relation of our’s,  
“ whom we (that is, Mary and my-  
“ self) have never seen, and whom Sir  
“ Walter describes as a model of hu-  
VOL. III. G “ man

“ man perfection ; but the poor mortal, it seems, was unfortunate in a first attachment, and has since almost forsworn the society of our sex ; love, at least, they say, has since formed no part of his amusement ; and, after being abroad, for almost twelve months, among the lovely *Parisiennes* and *bella signioras*, he has returned with just as much indifference for the sex as he set out with. Now, if such an irresistible being as my brother describes him, do not you think it would be a meritorious action to attempt to awaken his slumbering sensibility ? for it is a shame, so few as there are, that a charming mortal should be lost to society and happiness.”

“ Why,

“ Why, yes, Miss Bootle, I think  
“ it would indeed be meritorious,  
“ could you insure the experiment from  
“ becoming dangerous to yourself; but  
“ it is not impossible, that, in attempt-  
“ ing to awaken his dormant passions,  
“ your own may take the alarm.”

“ A shrewd remark, I protest,” cries  
Sir Walter. “ What answer do you  
“ make to that, Charlotte ? ”

“ Why, aye, as Mrs. Cofway says,  
“ that is a rock I was not aware of, till  
“ her sagacity pointed it out. But,  
“ the more danger, the more ho-  
“ nour.”

At that moment the door opened; and a graceful figure, in deep mourning, presented himself before us.

“ My expected friend, Sir Philip Westcombe,” said the baronet, and introduced him to us separately.

“ Westcombe, Westcombe,” thought I; (does not your heart thrill at the sound, Harriet?) and I presently recollected that it was the name of your truant lover; yet, at that time, I had not the most distant suggestion of its being really he.

He was polite to all; talked like a Chatham on every subject that was introduced, and discovered the most conversible

versible talents, till Charlotte unthinkingly began to talk of a young lady who had that day gone off with her father's clerk. In an instant the fine bloom forsook his cheeks; a stifled sigh bespoke his agitation; and, rising from his seat, he recollected an engagement of consequence at seven, promised soon to repeat his visit, and immediately took his leave, to the no small mortification of all the company.

“ Ah! heavens,” says Miss Mary,  
“ how could you be so thoughtless, sister?  
“ do not you remember that prudent French adage, *Qu’il ne faut pas*  
“ *parler de corde dans la maison d’un*  
“ *pendu?* For my part, I trembled  
“ when you first opened your lips. It  
“ is cruel to probe wounds so recently  
G 3                      “ healed.

“ healed. This is indeed awakening  
“ Sir Philip’s sensibility with a wit-  
“ ness !”

“ I am sorry, indeed,” replied Char-  
lotte, “ for the blunder ; but I had  
“ really quite forgotten that the story  
“ bore an affinity to his own melancholy  
“ tale, which seems to be still very  
“ fresh upon his memory, by the emo-  
“ tions he discovered.

“ I am very sorry,” repeated she  
again ; “ the more, as it is a blunder  
“ for which I cannot apologize without  
“ increasing the pain I have already gi-  
“ ven him. Really it is an elegant  
“ mortal ; I cannot think how any  
“ woman could have so little taste as to  
“ let

“ let a plebeian wretch of a clerk sup-  
“ plant him in her affections.

“ I will tell you how it was, Mrs.  
“ Cofway.” (This was what I want-  
ed, my dear ; for I found myself very  
much interested in learning the baro-  
net’s story.) “ About two years ago,  
“ when Sjr Philip was only Mr. West-  
“ combe, he was introduced, by some  
“ young acquaintance, to the house of  
“ a rich merchant in the city, who had  
“ not long married his second wife, a  
“ girl about eighteen, though himself,  
“ at that time, was near sixty ; a very  
“ eligible foil to the gay young fellows  
“ who fluttered round his table, and  
“ seemed emulous to do him honour,  
“ or, rather, to have put an additional  
G 4 “ syllable

“ syllable to the little honour he  
“ had.

“ Mrs. Mostyn,” (my suspicions,  
then, Harriet, were confirmed,) “ in-  
“ stead of discouraging the giddy  
“ throng, as she certainly ought to  
“ have done, was never so happy as in  
“ a croud; and the old gentleman, if  
“ report say true, became soon of no  
“ farther consequence, in the eyes of  
“ this modern wife, than as she looked  
“ upon him a convenient cloak to her  
“ amours.

“ It was the fashion to admire her;  
“ and Westcombe, among the rest,  
“ was not backward in paying the tri-  
“ bute which a pretty face generally  
“ extorts from the gallant and youthful,  
“ but,

“ but, whatever advances the lady  
“ made, had no thoughts of entering  
“ into more soft engagements.

“ Just at the time when Mrs. Mos-  
“ tyn was in the zenith of her conquer-  
“ ing reign, her husband (as if fate  
“ employed him to oppose a rival)  
“ brought home a daughter by his for-  
“ mer marriage, who as much eclipsed  
“ her arrogant step-mother in beauty as  
“ she apparently did in virtue and all  
“ the genuine graces of the mind.  
“ For a short time, they appeared toge-  
“ ther in her parties; but, jealous of  
“ Harriet’s rising consequence among  
“ the male part of her visitors, with  
“ accomplishments that would have  
“ graced a court, the poor young lady  
“ was condemned immediately to the  
G 5 “ nursery;

“ nursery ; and, whenever enquired  
“ for among her brilliant circles, indis-  
“ position afforded the best excuse for  
“ absence.

“ It was then that Westcombe learn-  
“ ed the true situation of his heart ; the  
“ absence of Miss Mostyn spoke more  
“ forcibly to its feelings than her pre-  
“ sence had done before. He soon  
“ found that her indisposition was  
“ merely the pretext of a libertine wo-  
“ man, jealous of superiority ; and he  
“ determined to procure an interview,  
“ and disclose a passion as honourable  
“ as sincere.

“ With some difficulty he attained  
“ that satisfaction ; and, by the consent  
“ of the young lady, who owned a si-  
“ milar

“ milar prepossession in his favour, he  
“ soon made the most generous propo-  
“ sals to her father ; but, as Mrs. Mos-  
“ tyn was (as on all occasions) consult-  
“ ed before his answer, it may be sup-  
“ posed his proposals were not accept-  
“ ed.

“ Notwithstanding this disappoint-  
“ ment to their hopes, they, for some  
“ time, maintained a secret corres-  
“ pondence ; and, impossible as the  
“ accomplishment of their wishes at  
“ that time appeared, continued to  
“ vow eternal fidelity to each other.

“ In some of her letters, the young  
“ lady had acquainted him with a disa-  
“ greeable proposal of marriage, that  
“ had been concerted by her mother-in-

“ law, to which she vowed never to  
“ listen, and averred that no force on  
“ earth should constrain her to accept  
“ of any hand but his.

“ Who, then, would have suspected  
“ her fidelity? when, lo! all on a  
“ sudden, she discontinued writing;  
“ and, from that time, he could never  
“ account for her silence, till it was  
“ explained, a few months afterwards,  
“ by her sudden invisibility; and, as  
“ one of her father’s most menial clerks  
“ disappeared, at the same time, with a  
“ considerable sum of money, it was  
“ supposed they went off together, and  
“ it has since been reported that they  
“ are gone to Ireland.

“ This

“ This cruel disappointment to his  
“ affections, aggravated by the confi-  
“ deration of the indiscretion of their  
“ object, so affected the young gentle-  
“ man, that his emotions were succeed-  
“ ed by a violent fever, which confined  
“ him for some weeks, but at length  
“ yielded to medicine and a constitution  
“ less weak than his passions; but,  
“ though he recovered his health, the  
“ depression of his spirits still remain-  
“ ed; and, when judged to be in a  
“ sufficient state of convalescence to  
“ venture abroad, he determined to vi-  
“ sit other countries, in hopes to reco-  
“ ver that serenity he had lost in this;  
“ and, it is said, set out on his travels  
“ thoroughly disgusted with all our sex;  
“ which contempt, if we may judge by

“ a

“ a letter he not long since wrote to my  
“ brother, rather increased than diminished during his tour to the continent; or, if he does not condemn,  
“ he at least looks with indifference on,  
“ the most lovely face, determined, I  
“ suppose, to venture his heart no more  
“ on a coast where he has once been  
“ wrecked.”

The agreeable manner, in which Miss Bootle related the baronet's story, would have much amused me, had it not been for my indignation to think the principal party concerned in it had been so vilely traduced; and, without considering that concealment was still your object, indeed, my dear Harriet, I was within a hair's breadth of discovering your secret; but, though recollection

lection prevented my imprudence, it did not prevent my standing forth a champion in your cause; and, with the most deserved and uncontrollable invectives against your vile step-mother, I averred the whole report of your elopement to be a falsity planned to serve some sinister end, adding my wishes, that an exposure of her perfidy and infidelity to your father might one day be the reward of her cruel and infamous conduct, both to him and you. “ That  
“ Miss Mostyn is perfectly innocent of  
“ the accusation alleged against her, ladies, I am convinced, though, for  
“ some particular reasons, not permitted to prove it at present; but, had  
“ she been guilty of the *faux pas* attributed to her, what greater imprudence would she have been guilty of,  
“ in

“ in taking one clerk out of her father’s  
“ counting-house by choice, than in  
“ accepting another they would have  
“ forced her to marry? but, fortunate-  
“ ly, she is reserved for a better fate  
“ than either, and, purified in the fur-  
“ nace of affliction, her innocence and  
“ virtue will, I trust, hereafter shine  
“ forth more bright than ever.”

“ You know her, then, madam. Is  
“ it possible she can have been so vilely  
“ traduced without foundation? What  
“ has not Mrs. Mostyn to answer for!  
“ But it is strange she has never been  
“ heard of since. I declare I am re-  
“ joiced to think of it; for, though,  
“ in the gaiety of my heart, I averred  
“ an intention of setting my cap at the  
“ baronet, it would give me infinitely  
“ more

“ more satisfaction to see him restored  
“ to his long-lost happiness by means  
“ so much more satisfactory than a  
“ new-born passion, and to a physician  
“ so skilled in the nature of his disease I  
“ should most willingly resign the task  
“ of healing.”

By this little specimen of Miss Bottle's manner, you may perceive, that, though volatile, she is of an amiable disposition; and that alone is sufficient to divest you of any fears of rivalry, even were your swain inclined to console himself, which at present there is little danger of, if we may judge of his heart by external appearances; for the traces of unhappiness are still as visible, on his manly countenance, as if produced from some recent cause; and to the  
death

death of Sir William it cannot be attributed, as they never lived in that harmony which brothers are expected to do, owing, as I am told, to the libertine disposition of the elder, who, contemning that goodness of heart he had not power to imitate, treated Mr. Westcombe in the most brutal manner.

You see, my dear Harriet, the persecutions of virtue are but for a time; your's, I flatter myself, are near a termination. A bright (though it may perhaps be a distant) prospect opens to your view; and the few dark shades, which yet obscure your happiness, now, that the principal one may be removed by the conviction of your innocence, will, I am persuaded, soon give way, and

and perpetual sunshine enliven the future scene.

We mean to cultivate the acquaintance of Sir Philip, and shall unite our efforts to detain him in his native clime, which he yet seems bent on quitting for some years to come.

I am interrupted by some company.  
In a day or two you shall hear again from

Your

OCTAVIA.

LETTER

## LETTER XXX.

THE SAME

TO

THE SAME.

**W**E have already twice met Sir Philip in Portland-Place, and once have been favoured with his company at a private party of our own. We begin to be upon the most amicable terms. He even does not scruple to speak of the cause of his dejection before us; and, in conjunction with the lively Charlotte, I have endeavoured to convince him, that all the joys of life are not confined to other countries.

He

He sighs, shakes his head, acknowledges the observation to be just, but adds, "those of every country are fleeting."

"One would think," cries Miss Bootle, "that Sir Philip was a descendant of Solomon, not many generations removed, by the sagacity he shews in discovering, so early in life, that all is vanity."

"Alas! my dear madam, there requires but little sagacity to discover what experience shews us every day. Ill usage brings wisdom, as sin does repentance."

"True; but is it not sometimes possible to suppose that the effect of  
" ill

“ ill usage which may probably result  
“ from a different cause ?”

“ Certainly ; but, where circum-  
“ stances appear indubitable, what must  
“ we trust to but the conviction of our  
“ own reason ?”

“ But, if our reason convinces us,  
“ fir, that we have been mal-treated, it  
“ surely does not prompt us to con-  
“ found all the world with a single in-  
“ dividual. If one source of happiness  
“ closes, others are open to us, in  
“ England as well as in France or Ita-  
“ ly.”

“ I think, Sir Philip,” added I,  
when Charlotte had done speaking, “ it  
“ is

" is not in foreign climes you must  
" look for your's."

" Teach me, then, madam, in what  
" part of these I shall seek it ; it would  
" indeed be a work of humanity, for it  
" is a phantom I have hitherto pursued  
" in vain."

" At Nottingham, I believe, you  
" may overtake it." Do not be  
frightened, Harriet, I did not quite  
betray you.

" At Nottingham, madam ! In  
" what shape shall I find it ?"

" In the form of an agreeable friend  
" of mine, who is infected with just  
" such an indifference for the world as  
" yourself.

“ yourself. I know no two on earth  
“ who would be so likely to console  
“ each other.”

“ You prescribe ably, madam; but  
“ of the efficacy of your prescriptions I  
“ am very doubtful.”

“ Make the experiment,” cried I,  
“ the next time we go down; and, if  
“ it fails, I yield the honour, of recon-  
“ ciling you to happiness, to a more  
“ able hand.”

“ Agreed, if nothing particular pre-  
“ vent me from the pleasure of attend-  
“ ing you.”

The conversation then took a diffe-  
rent turn, and since I have not seen  
him;

him; but there is little doubt of our prevailing on him to accompany us, when the time arrives in which I am permitted the felicity of again embracing you.

By a few more words, I could have instantly sent him, on the pinions of love, to Nottingham; but it was a step I could not presume to take without the concurrence of my Harriet, however agreeable the surprise might prove to her.

By some enquiries I have made concerning your family, I learned, that Mrs. Mostyn's glory is in the vane. A discovery of some imprudences has, at length, produced unfavourable suspicions of her conduct; and, though your

father does not oppose her gay career, they live on the most distant terms, and it is imagined a separation will soon ensue; but, as yet, this is only whispered. Should such an event take place, which I most heartily pray for, it will then be the time to reinstate you in his long-withholden affection, on the recovery of which it will be the highest felicity of your friends to greet you; and to none, my dear Harriet, will it be a more sincere one than to

Your admiring

OCTAVIA COSWAY,

Transmit

Transmit our best wishes to the happy lovers. Tell our dear Selina, that I long to address her by a more matronly title; and assure her, that the first visit I make, after a certain event, will be to the friends of my heart, if my strength will admit of such a journey. I forgot to tell you, that both Mrs. Mostyn's children are gone to a better world. Happy innocents! to have left a scene, in which pernicious example would probably have been your bane, and deprived you of the power of becoming candidates for the blissful abodes you have now attained!

## CONCLUSION,

BY THE

EDITOR.

**A**FTER the *accouchement* of Mrs. Cofway, which was attended with circumstances as favourable as her friends could wish, all correspondence ceased between the parties. It is therefore necessary to acquaint our readers, that Sir Philip Westcombe was prevailed upon to accompany the happy couple to Castle-Dale, where he had the unexpected satisfaction to behold again the beloved object he had believed lost to him.

him for ever. An *éclaircissement* immediately ensued, in which he had the fullest conviction of Miss Mostyn's innocence and the perfidy of her step-mother; after which their happiness met with no alloy but in their fears that Mr. Mostyn would still refuse his consent to their union; but these were quickly obviated by the friendship of the good old Shenstone, who made a journey to the metropolis on purpose to effect a reconciliation.

Stung with remorse for the unfatherly part he had acted, Mr. Mostyn too late discovered, that he had deserted a virtuous child for an abandoned wife, and determined to be no longer the dupe of her infamous practices. He made her an allowance far beyond her merit,  
and,

and, when the articles of separation were finished, retired into the country, bestowing all his fortune on his daughter but what was sufficient to support him in a comfortable retreat; and, it is thought, should Providence long continue him an inhabitant of this world, he will, by a daily-increased affection for a worthy child, atone for that neglect he cannot now think of without sorrow.

The nuptials of Sir Philip and Miss Mostyn, it is expected, will take place at the same time as Mr. Petwyn's with Miss Maynard, which will be deferred no longer than till they have paid the last duties to the good friend who has so generously contributed to their happiness; but it is an event, to which even the idea of their approaching bliss cannot

not induce them to look forward without a tear, so much have the generous conduct and patible virtues of this worthy man endeared him to them.

Having brought the principal characters into the haven of felicity, and conducted the remaining ones into the same flowery path, the editor cannot do more than add his earnest wishes, that every one, who is deserving of similar happiness, may be equally fortunate in the conclusion of their drama.

THE END.

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